

Issues Addressed in the South Dakota RMP/EIS

A planning issue is a major controversy or dispute regarding management of resources or uses and is developed from demands, concerns, conflicts, or problems about use or management of public lands and resources. These issues are usually expressed as potential adverse consequences or effects that a particular land or resource use may have on other lands or resources used or valued for other purposes. Planning issues drive the formulation of the range of alternatives considered in the RMP/EIS, such as what areas, if any, contain unique or sensitive resources requiring special management. A reasonable range of alternatives provides various scenarios for how the BLM and cooperating agencies can address this and other key planning issues, including the management of resources and resource uses in the planning area. In other words, key planning issues serve as the rationale for alternative development.

Preliminary planning issues were identified through an extensive review of the South Dakota RMP (1986) and associated amendments and decision documents. The Preparation Plan for the North Dakota RMP and South Dakota RMP identified land management direction that could be carried forward and management direction that needed to be changed. The preliminary planning issues were refined through collaborative efforts and through public scoping. The planning issues identified for developing alternatives in this Draft RMP/EIS are summarized below.

The issues that were identified (not in priority order) include:

Issue: Energy Development. Manage energy development to provide for domestic energy production while protecting the integrity of other resources.

Issue: Vegetation Management. Manage public lands to provide desired plant communities and meet objectives of the BLM Standards for Rangeland Health (Glossary and Appendix A).

Issue: Wildlife Habitat. Manage public lands to conserve wildlife species, maintain or improve their habitats, and control invasive species.

Issue: Special Status Species. Manage public lands to conserve and recover threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species.

Issue: Travel Management and Access. Determine how transportation and access would be managed in the planning area to provide for use and enjoyment of public lands, while protecting significant resource values and providing user safety.

Issue: Commercial Uses. Determine what public lands would be available for commercial activities and how those activities would be managed.

Issue: Land Ownership Adjustments. Determine criteria to make public land tenure adjustments, including disposal of public land and acquisition of nonpublic lands, and determine what public lands may be available for future adjustment activities.

Issue: Visual Resource Management. Manage public land to conserve or improve visual resource values.

Issue: Climate Change. Provide for adaptable, flexible management and diverse, healthy ecosystems that are resilient to the impacts of climate change. Consider the impact of BLM actions on climate change.